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at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 13th MEETING

Chairman:	Mr. KITTIKHOUN	(Lao People's Democratic Republic)
later:	Ms. CARAYANIDES (Vice-Chairman)	(Australia)
later:	Mr. KITTIKHOUN (Chairman)	(Lao People's Democratic Republic)

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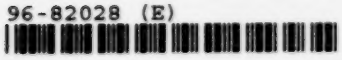

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 83: INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE (continued) (A/51/20 and A/51/276; A/C.4/51/L.7)

1. The CHAIRMAN drew the attention of the members of the Committee to draft resolution A/C.4/51/L.7, which contained the declaration on international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for the benefit and in the interest of all States, taking into particular account the needs of developing countries.

2. Mr. RIBEIRO (Brazil) said that for Brazil 1996 had been characterized by intense activities in the peaceful uses of outer space. The Brazilian Space Agency, established in 1994, was now fully structured, and the Alcantara Launching Centre had been operational for more than two years. The first series of SCD satellites manufactured in Brazil, designed for environmental data collection, had proved a success, the development of the necessary technologies for the Brazilian satellite launching vehicle had been completed, progress had also been made in the implementation of the joint Chinese-Brazilian project on the remote sensing of earth resources, and a cooperation agreement had been concluded with the United States National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). The common denominator of those and other projects was the exclusively peaceful purpose of all of Brazil's outer space activities.

3. Brazil was pleased with the extensive work done by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, which exemplified its unique role in the promotion of scientific and technical cooperation between developed and developing countries. The technical presentations on the problem of space debris and the holding of the symposium on the utilization of micro- and small satellites had also been useful. The Subcommittee played a key role in facilitating the establishment of regional centres for space science and technology education. In that connection, his delegation was happy to note that Brazil and Mexico had completed the bilateral process of establishing the regional centre for Latin America and the Caribbean, which would be affiliated to the United Nations in accordance with General Assembly resolution 50/27.

4. The approval by consensus at the thirty-ninth session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) of the draft declaration on international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space had been a significant achievement of the Legal Subcommittee, and Brazil was convinced that the text would be adopted by consensus by the General Assembly as well and would thus be added to the corpus juris spatialis as the authoritative interpretation of the principle that the exploration and use of outer space must be carried out for the benefit and in the interest of all States, taking into particular account the needs of developing countries. The adoption by consensus of the text of the declaration, the consideration of which had taken place in a spirit of understanding and compromise, was especially rewarding for Brazil and the other countries of the Group of 77 and was a clear demonstration of the effectiveness of the work of the Legal Subcommittee in the progressive development of international space law.

5. The Brazilian delegation welcomed the beginning of the discussion in the Committee of the membership of its Bureau and also noted with satisfaction the achievement of a global understanding that decisions regarding its working methods should be arrived at by consensus and in conditions of transparency, predictability and flexibility, taking due account of the principles of equitable geographical representation and rotation.

6. International cooperation for the peaceful use of outer space was one of the greatest challenges of the times, and its importance would no doubt become even more apparent during the next century. The involvement of the United Nations in space activities through COPUOS and the Programme on Space Applications were essential to ensuring that the advancement of space science and technology contributed to global sustainable development, particularly for developing countries. All the measures taken in that sphere helped to make space exploration not the privilege of a few but an adventure shared by all humankind.

7. Mr. MARSICO (Argentina) said that Argentina's space programme was a civil one and its political and legal basis reflected Argentina's well-known position on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Its space activities pursued exclusively peaceful goals and were designed to satisfy the needs of the population. It carried out satellite projects in conjunction with various States. For example, joint projects with NASA were currently being implemented in such areas as the discovery and evaluation of astronomical phenomena and remote sensing for the collection of useful data for forestry valuation surveys, forecasting of agricultural production, and determination of the productivity of coastal regions. Joint projects were also being carried out with Brazil, and cooperation was being developed with the space agencies of Germany, Canada, France, Spain and the Russian Federation.

8. His delegation considered that the draft declaration on international cooperation, adopted by COPUOS by consensus, should also be adopted by consensus by the General Assembly.

9. Another area of activity of importance for Argentina was the establishment of a regional centre for space science and technology education for Latin America. Argentina announced its intention to establish links between the regional centre and the Mario Gullich Institute of Advanced Space Studies in Argentina.

10. His delegation attached particular importance to the working methods of COPUOS. With regard to the membership of the Bureau, it favoured retention of the current number of members, chosen on the basis of equitable geographical representation for a three-year term of office, with the right of reelection to one further term but without prejudice to the principle of rotation. As to the agenda, his delegation was convinced that it should include new topics of general interest, but that did not mean that the items whose consideration had not been completed should be discontinued. The inclusion of new agenda items should be accompanied by a programme of work, with a statement of the objectives and an approximate time framework for the items' consideration.

11. The Argentine delegation supported the proposal for reduction of the duration of the sessions of COPUOS and believed that a session of five and a half weeks satisfied the criterion of economy and the actual needs. With regard to the decision-making process, consensus was the best means of making progress. It was therefore preferable for decisions on both substantive and procedural questions to be reached by consensus.

12. Mr. MAXIMOV (Bulgaria) said that his Government had always welcomed the fact that the United Nations had become a focal point for international cooperation in the field of outer space, thereby providing all countries with opportunities to contribute to and to benefit from activities in that field on the basis of mutual understanding and trust among participating countries. A major achievement of the international community had been its ability over the past decade to avoid developments which, as a result of ideological and military confrontation, could not only have seriously hampered international cooperation in outer space, but could also have threatened world peace and security.

13. His delegation appreciated the useful work done by COPUOS and its two Subcommittees at their recent sessions. Despite the divergence of views among different countries, favourable conditions existed for even more effective and productive work by COPUOS with a view to reaching consensus on long-standing problems and new challenges. The recommendations of the Secretary-General in his report A/48/221 served as a good basis for efforts in that direction. New political realities in particular had increased the chances of finding a mutually acceptable solution to the problems of defining and delimiting outer space and of the character and utilization of the geostationary orbit, which were still creating obstacles to efforts to strengthen the rule of law in space. His delegation also shared the view that a well-prepared Third UNISPACE Conference could be very useful in the search for a new, mutually acceptable approach to resolving many outstanding problems.

14. His delegation wished to reiterate that one of the main challenges facing the Committee was to ensure that all countries shared the benefits of space technologies; in so doing it should consider all ways and means of applying the principle that the exploration and utilization of outer space should be carried out for the benefit and in the best interests of all States, with particular attention to the needs of developing countries. In that connection his Government hoped that the declaration on international cooperation agreed upon at the thirty-ninth session of COPUOS would be adopted by consensus by the General Assembly.

15. The Committee should continue to pay special attention to the need to minimize the potentially adverse impact of space activities, such as the generation of space debris and possible contamination resulting from the use of space objects with nuclear power sources on board. His delegation shared the view that essential and timely measures needed to be taken to ensure the safe and productive utilization of outer space, and it therefore supported the workplan adopted by the Committee concerning that matter. For its part, his Government would neither participate in nor support space research programmes involving satellites with nuclear power sources on board, nor would it take part in the development and launch into space of transportation systems causing release of space debris. Since his Government wished to develop international

cooperation in that field, Bulgarian representatives had taken part throughout 1996 in space forums in Vienna, Colorado Springs and Beijing. At the same time, the Bulgarian Aerospace Agency had initiated cooperation with a number of other space agencies.

16. In the light of the growing importance and responsibilities of COPUOS, his delegation believed that it was reasonable to review the Committee's working methods thoroughly and carefully. Such reform efforts should result in the increased efficiency of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies.

17. Mr. JOSE (India) said that his delegation was satisfied with the progress achieved by COPUOS at its thirty-ninth session. In addition, the consensus decision to convene a special session of COPUOS in Vienna, preferably in 1999, which would be open to all States Members of the United Nations, was an important step in enhancing the opportunities for strengthening international cooperation in outer space activities. Another important achievement had been the agreement reached on the draft declaration on international cooperation, which had been recommended for adoption by the General Assembly at the current session.

18. The opportunities for utilizing outer space to improve the quality of life and accelerate the social and economic development of all countries were increasing in step with rapid progress in the field of space technology. In order for such benefits to be realized, a strong commitment to promoting international cooperation at the global level was required. COPUOS had been playing an important part in promoting such cooperation, in particular through its work in the scientific and technical spheres, the development of international space law and the implementation of programs which widely disseminated the benefits of space activities to all countries, particularly developing countries.

19. The major changes that had taken place since the end of the cold war warranted an assessment by the international community of the new possibilities for cooperation that had arisen. With its limited membership, COPUOS could not effectively carry out that task. All States Members of the United Nations should take part in considering issues which hindered the development and use of space technology for the common good. His delegation believed that the Third UNISPACE Conference would provide a unique opportunity in that regard.

20. COPUOS itself had not remained immune to winds of change; it had reviewed its working methods, the composition and method of setting up its Bureau, the term of its officers and the duration of its sessions. His delegation welcomed and supported the efforts to ensure that the democratic principles of rotation, equitable representation and transparency prevailed in the work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies.

21. His delegation wished to report the successes of the Indian space programme, the main thrust of which continued to be the development of space technology for peaceful applications, particularly for assisting the rapid social and economic development of the country. During the past year, his Government had launched three satellites: the geostationary satellite INSAT-2C providing telecommunications services and the IRS-1C and IRS-P3 earth

observation satellites used for crop monitoring and yield prediction, better management of land and water resources, environmental protection, geological mapping and other remote sensing applications. Indian satellites not only provided vital input to national development programmes but were also used to carry out joint projects as part of international cooperation.

22. India was also attempting to promote international cooperation in the field of space education. In April 1996 it had conducted the first course, on remote sensing and geographic information systems, at the Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific, which had been established in 1995 through an intergovernmental agreement. Preparations for the next course, on satellite communications, were under way.

23. Recognizing that advanced space technology could play an important role in speeding the development process, India had been making a focused effort to develop and apply that technology. At the ever-expanding frontier of space technology, new and more effective ways of cooperation were required. India believed that the United Nations, through COPUOS and other forums, would be responsive to the changes in the modern world and would spearhead the drive for new directions in cooperation.

24. Mr. TAKAHASHI (Japan) said that COPUOS, which coordinated international cooperation within the United Nations system in the field of outer space, was entrusted with the task of responding to the changing needs of the international community in the light of the development of new space technologies and of changes in the international environment. With regard to substantive matters, Japan welcomed the decision to convene a special session of COPUOS (UNISPACE-III) at the United Nations Office at Vienna, open to all Member States. That special session would address the concerns of all countries, and its agenda should include issues relating to remote sensing of the earth and the environment, disaster prevention, satellite communications, meteorology and spin-off benefits of space technology. His delegation welcomed the agreement finally reached on the text of the draft declaration on international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for the benefit and in the interests of all States. Japan hoped that the General Assembly would adopt the draft as it stood. He noted that the draft declaration was simply a general statement for the promotion of international cooperation and was not intended to establish a new legal framework for the development of space technology.

25. With regard to the working methods of the Committee and its Subcommittees, his delegation was pleased that inter-sessional informal consultations among its members were being conducted in an effort to reach a consensus on the composition of the Bureau, the structure of the agenda and the duration of sessions. With regard to the structure of the agenda, it was his view that in discussing that issue, it would be appropriate to consider current international activities in the exploration and uses of outer space with a view to promoting the space activities of each country. As for the duration of the sessions, his delegation believed that they could be shortened if discussions focused on practical matters, thereby ensuring that more efficient use was made of conference-servicing resources. Regarding the composition of the Bureaux of the Committee and its two Subcommittees, the principle of equitable geographic representation should be reflected in the election of officers. At the same

time, however, in selecting the chairmen of the Subcommittees, professional qualifications and experience of the candidates should be considered.

26. Turning to the issue of space debris, he noted with appreciation that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee had drafted a technical report on measurement of space debris in accordance with its multi-year plan. That report was a pioneering step in promoting international cooperation on appropriate strategies to minimize the potential impact of space debris on future space missions.

27. Mr. HODGKINS (United States of America) said that recent years had seen unprecedented political change and had furthered international cooperation in space exploration. Much attention was currently focused on the application of space techniques to the understanding and solution of terrestrial problems.

28. Over two decades after the first American-Soviet cooperative space flight, which had shown that opposing super-Powers could be united in space exploration, the United States space programme had reached a new level in cooperation with the Russian Federation: the United States single-mission space-flight endurance record had been set aboard the Mir space station.

29. In August 1996, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) had announced that a research team had found evidence suggesting that a primitive form of life had existed on Mars more than 3.6 billion years earlier, which made the NASA Mars programmes all the more crucial.

30. The United States of America was strongly committed to the principle, found in the outer space Treaty of 1967, that the exploration and use of outer space should be carried on for the benefit of all peoples. That commitment had been further underscored with the release of President Clinton's policy on the use and management of the global positioning system (GPS), which opened the possibility of rapid growth in international civil, commercial and scientific use of GPS. It also reaffirmed the commitment of the United States to providing the GPS standard positioning service on a continuous, worldwide basis, free of direct user fees.

31. On 19 September, President Clinton had announced a new national space policy, the first assessment of the United States space programme since the end of the cold war. The policy reaffirmed the commitment of the United States to the exploration and use of outer space by all nations for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of all humanity. It called for the enhancement of knowledge of the Earth, the solar system and the universe and the promotion of international cooperation in space. In accordance with that policy, space nuclear reactors would not be used in Earth orbit without approval by the President or a person designated by him. Furthermore, the President had directed that the United States should take a leadership role in international forums in adopting strategies and practices aimed at minimization of space debris, and would cooperate internationally in the exchange of information on debris research and identification of options for debris mitigation.

32. His delegation wished to join previous speakers in expressing satisfaction at the positive developments that had occurred in COPUOS and its Subcommittees,

which demonstrated that the principle of consensus could work effectively. In that regard, his delegation was pleased to join the consensus on the adoption of the draft declaration, the goals of which reflected, in part, United States policy on international space activities.

33. Over the past decade, his delegation and others had put forward detailed proposals for improving the organization of the work of COPUOS and its Subcommittees. In taking stock of what had been achieved, his delegation noted with satisfaction that many of those proposals had been adopted. The productive discussions in the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee were particularly noteworthy. On the other hand, his delegation was convinced that more could be accomplished with regard to working methods, particularly in the Legal Subcommittee. The consultations which the Chairman of COPUOS was conducting on the methods of work and the agendas of the Committee and its Subcommittees constituted an important step towards enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of COPUOS. In that context, his delegation placed the highest priority on two results. First, there must be an unconditional commitment by all Member States to the principle of consensus in both the substantive and the procedural matters considered by COPUOS. Second, it was imperative to make significant reductions in the duration of sessions of the Legal Subcommittee and the Committee, since experience had shown that those two bodies could complete their work in a shorter time; that would result in real savings in conference services.

34. Lastly, his delegation reaffirmed its commitment to work with all Member States in order to make the work of COPUOS as relevant as possible to the ever-expanding opportunities for international cooperation in space exploration.

35. Ms. Carayanides (Australia), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

36. Mr. SANTAPUTRA (Thailand), after noting many positive developments in the work of COPUOS, said that the Committee's report also reflected differences of opinion among groups of countries concerning the work of COPUOS and its usefulness, as a result of which many issues remained unsettled, such as the problem of space debris. His delegation hoped that the next report would reflect more positive developments, and declared its readiness to join the Committee at the first opportunity.

37. Thailand's space activities were concentrated in such areas as telecommunications and remote sensing. There was a national communications satellite system called THAICOM which provided service to the government and private sectors. Currently, two satellites were in operation, and THAICOM-3 would be launched into orbit by early 1997. In the future Thailand planned to launch THAICOM-4 into orbit to facilitate radio and television broadcasting. With regard to remote sensing, the Thailand Remote Sensing Center (TRSC) operated a ground receiving station which acquired remote sensing data from six satellites. The Center also served as a regional satellite data distribution centre. Active use of its facilities and training at the Center were geared primarily to natural resource management and environmental monitoring. In cooperation with international agencies, TRSC also organized annual international seminars and workshops on remote sensing and Geographical Information Systems and conducted research activities with many institutions in Japan, Canada, the United States and China. One of the major collaborative

research activities was Seawatch Thailand, which was a complete marine environmental monitoring and forecasting system.

38. Thailand's space activities had developed in tandem with global space technology; his delegation therefore appreciated the role played by COPUOS in strengthening international cooperation and norms for the peaceful exploration and use of outer space, and fully supported the draft declaration on international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space.

39. His delegation welcomed the decision of COPUOS to convene UNISPACE-III as a special session of the Committee; it was to be hoped that that would help towards the identification of common concerns and, if possible, the formulation of some solutions.

40. His Government reiterated its offer to host a branch centre of the Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education, which it believed would make space technology more accessible to countries in the region. Thailand was currently in the final stage of development of its first remote sensing satellite, which was scheduled to be launched by the year 2000. Thailand intended to cooperate with developing countries in the application of satellite data to crop monitoring, land use planning, forest management and other activities.

41. His delegation also attached great importance to the issue of space debris and urged the Committee to give it serious consideration. It believed that the costs of managing such debris should be borne by the users alone.

42. His delegation believed that the Committee's work was very important and that countries in every region should share in its burdens and benefits. The time had come to give serious consideration to expanding the Committee's membership on the basis of equitable geographical distribution. His delegation was particularly interested in becoming a member of the Committee, since that would provide an opportunity for Thailand to participate in the development and application of space technologies, and thus play a role in international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

43. Mrs. ZAZA (Zambia) said that international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space was an extremely important facet of international relations. COPUOS provided a forum for the exchange and dissemination of information regarding developments in space technology and afforded an opportunity to evaluate the benefits of space technology and determine how it could best be used for the benefit of all countries, including those with the least resources and technological know-how.

44. In its study of the peaceful uses of outer space, COPUOS had highlighted the spin-off benefits of space technology, in particular new techniques in meteorology, water treatment, image and data processing, aviation, public safety, human health and telemedicine.

45. Her country was gratified to note that COPUOS had identified spin-off benefits that would provide technological capabilities, for example in climate

monitoring and early disaster warning. Access to such technology would assist substantially in resolving a number of problems.

46. Her delegation urged COPUOS to continue to address the hazards posed by space debris. The Committee should also strive to ensure the prevention of such debris and to minimize the risk of collision between space debris and other space objects.

47. Her delegation welcomed the adoption at the thirty-ninth session of COPUOS of the draft declaration on international cooperation, which the Committee had recommended for adoption by the General Assembly. It hoped that the declaration would be adopted and that both developed and developing nations would work together to promote cooperation in the uses of outer space technology in the interests of peace and security for all.

48. Mr. KYRYCHENKO (Ukraine) said that one of the positive trends at the present time was that more and more countries, including developing countries, were using space science and technology to improve the living standards of their peoples. However, additional efforts were needed to make full use of the potential benefits of international cooperation in the exploration of outer space.

49. His delegation welcomed the progress achieved by COPUOS and its subcommittees on a number of important issues under consideration, but regretted that discussions on such issues as space delimitation and the geostationary orbit had not produced any visible results because of doubts concerning the legal aspect of those problems.

50. In the opinion of his delegation, the questionnaire on aerospace objects approved by COPUOS and distributed to all States Members of the United Nations provided a good example of a possible solution to emerging problems and might serve to promote consideration of the issue of space delimitation prior to the holding of a special session of COPUOS devoted to that problem.

51. His country paid great attention to the use of spin-off benefits of space technology in such areas as medical research, the processing of data from remote sensing of the Earth and meteorology, as well as the forecasting, prevention and mitigation of the consequences of natural disasters. His country had practical achievements and unique experience in that sphere and was open for broad cooperation with all interested partners, above all from the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. It considered that the coordinating role of COPUOS should be more closely focused on expanding the access of those countries to the achievements of space science.

52. His delegation fully endorsed the idea of holding regular meetings between satellite owners, their operators and users in order to work out joint measures, including those directed at expanding access to space information and reducing its costs.

53. His delegation was a proponent of the further expansion of international cooperation in space activities on a bilateral and multilateral basis in the interests of the scientific and socio-economic progress of all nations. Good

examples of such multilateral efforts were the agreements signed by Ukraine with the United States of America, the Russian Federation and China, as well as arrangements for cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space with 25 other countries. The further development of priority fields of international cooperation was also provided for in his country's draft new national space programme for the period to the year 2007.

54. Ukraine had taken the initiative of proposing the establishment, at the premises of the Far Space Communication Centre, located in the Crimea, of an international space research centre. The astronomical observatory in the Crimea could also be used for the purposes of a number of international programmes and projects.

55. The unique laboratory and experimental facilities of his country's space sector for testing and operating rocket launchers and other space technology also offered opportunities for using that potential for commercial purposes. The agreement signed in December 1995 between Ukraine and the United States of America had opened up prospects for the implementation of a historic project undertaken jointly by Ukraine, the United States, Norway and the Russian Federation, the aim of which was to use the Ukrainian Zenit rockets to launch satellites into space from a sea platform.

56. His delegation consistently supported the broadening of international cooperation in the exploration of outer space for peaceful purposes and the strengthening of the role of COPUOS and its subcommittees in elaborating the appropriate international legal instruments that would be of benefit to all countries.

57. Mr. Kittikhoun (Lao People's Democratic Republic) resumed the Chair.

58. Mr. DOUDECH (Tunisia) said that, recognizing the advantages of space technology, Tunisia had already established a national remote sensing centre. Tunisia attached great importance to international cooperation and believed that the recommendations of the second UNISPACE Conference (UNISPACE-82) provided very timely guidelines for developing and intensifying that cooperation so that more countries would benefit from the results of progress in respect of outer space.

59. However, the gap between developing and developed countries, which impeded cooperation between them in that sphere, needed to be stressed. It was disturbing that outer space had become the preserve of certain States at a time when it was becoming increasingly clear that the solution of certain problems, for example problems of the environment, required international cooperation in which all the parties involved had the appropriate technical resources.

60. Another area in which international cooperation should be intensified was the exchange of information. Instant information and its immediate receipt were often a prerequisite for correct action in situations requiring the use of space technology. For many States, the high cost of some operations requiring the use of space technology remained an obstacle to the implementation of vitally important projects, for example sustainable development projects. It should be noted that the establishment of cooperation in preventive activities, in

particular in early warning of natural disasters and desertification, would be cheaper than any form of cooperation for eliminating the damage caused by those disasters.

61. In that connection the United Nations Programme on Space Applications was a vital instrument for the promotion of international cooperation, taking into account the needs of developing countries. International support for the Programme must be increased with a view to the full implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE-82. The Working Group of the Whole was making a very important contribution in that respect. It was also gratifying that, in the light of those recommendations, many specialized agencies were devoting some activities to space matters. At the same time the lack of financial resources was regrettable, since it not only prevented the implementation of many planned projects, but also created a danger that the recommendations of UNISPACE-82 as a whole would never be implemented.

62. His delegation was glad that at its thirty-ninth session, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had adopted the draft declaration, recommended for adoption by the General Assembly. The draft declaration was an important achievement on the threshold on the third UNISPACE conference, and should give new impetus to international cooperation in that area.

63. Mr. HANIF (Pakistan) said that since outer space was the common heritage of mankind, the conclusion of a comprehensive convention to prevent an arms race in outer space should be vigorously pursued, and at the same time, faithful implementation of existing agreements on the peaceful applications of space science and technology should be promoted.

64. In the United Nations, the various aspects of the uses of outer space were taken up by separate bodies. The Conference on Disarmament had been entrusted with the task of preventing an arms race in outer space. The promotion of the peaceful uses of outer space was the primary objective of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. Those bodies complemented each other's work, yet there were no formal channels of communication between them. Practical mechanisms for coordination should be established between the two bodies.

65. Since the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had a special role to play in fostering international cooperation in the peaceful applications of space technology, his delegation welcomed the adoption of the draft declaration and hoped that the declaration would be adopted by consensus in the General Assembly as well.

66. International cooperation in the application of space technologies for environmental monitoring and sustainable development was very important. The use of remote sensing data could facilitate the implementation of the recommendations contained in Agenda 21. Institutional mechanisms needed to be established to provide remote sensing data and analysed information to all countries, particularly developing countries, at reasonable cost and in a timely manner. Developing countries also needed access to the spin-off benefits of space technology, including micro-satellite technology.

67. The United Nations Programme on Space Applications was making an important contribution to enhancing international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space. The United Nations had opened regional centres for space science and technology education. In that connection, there were a number of issues to be considered regarding the centre for Asia and the Pacific, which had become operational in November 1995. The growth of that centre into a network of nodes should be expedited and further consultations should be held regarding the optimal utilization of the centre.

68. At the same time, as had been observed by the Working Group of the Whole, many of the recommendations of UNISPACE-82 had not been implemented, even after 14 years. The main reason was the lack of financial resources. As Chairman of that working group, Pakistan was concerned about the lack of progress in that regard.

69. It was encouraging that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had agreed that the third UNISPACE conference should be held before the end of the century. It was to be hoped that at its 1997 session, the Advisory Committee would be able to finalize the agenda for that conference and agree on a specific date for it. Thorough preparatory work would help in making progress at the conference, and, more importantly, sufficient financial resources needed to be provided to ensure that the recommendations of the conference were fully implemented.

70. As to regional initiatives, at the ministerial conference held in Beijing in 1994, an Action Plan on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific had been adopted. A number of conferences had been held since then. In May 1996, the third Asia-Pacific Conference on Multilateral Cooperation in Space Technologies and Applications had been held, co-hosted by Pakistan and the Republic of Korea. Pakistan believed that those conferences provided useful forums for exchanging ideas.

71. Whether in the area of United Nations efforts to promote peaceful uses of outer space or in that of endeavours by regional forums, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space played an important role in facilitating such initiatives. Pakistan supported the continuing process of consultations on reforming the working methods of that Committee, including the composition and election of the bureau, duration of sessions and new agenda items. In that regard, Pakistan endorsed the position adopted by the Group of 77 and China. The reform process should be designed to fully exploit the Committee's potential in promoting the peaceful uses of outer space, strengthening the body of space law, contributing to the process of preventing the militarization of outer space and facilitating international cooperation in providing access to space technology.

72. Mr. OBNOSOV (Russian Federation) said that notwithstanding the obvious contribution made by COPUOS, it was becoming increasingly evident that its work needed to be brought into line with new requirements. However, the Russian Federation doubted the usefulness of those proposals aimed at an actual reduction in the status and role of the Committee and its Subcommittees and the transfer of its functions in the elaboration of political and legal principles to technical organizations and forums of various kinds. His delegation favoured

adherence to the principle of consensus in the taking of decisions by COPUOS, and did not think it desirable radically to curtail the duration of the sessions of the Committee and its Subcommittees. In his delegation's view, fuller account could be taken of States' positions if there was equitable geographical representation of the regional groups in the composition of the COPUOS bureau, which it would be possible to reorganize as early as the next session of the Committee. The whole question of improving the Committee's forms and methods of work, including possible changes in its agenda, could be discussed at the intersessional consultations, or, if necessary, in a special working group established to take concrete decisions.

73. As to the outcome of the current year's session of COPUOS and its Subcommittees, the situation with regard to consideration of the legal aspects of international cooperation had changed very substantially. It had not been possible to discuss in detail the new text of the working paper on the regime for utilization of the geostationary orbit, but it appeared to take fuller account of the views of the various sides, although it contained a number of debatable provisions. While saluting the efforts of the document's authors, his delegation considered that it might be possible to make a less rigorous procedure for access to the geostationary orbit available solely to systems intended exclusively to serve the territory of a specific developing country and not to provide an international link, but not to the so-called "paper" satellite systems. COPUOS might of course continue its elaboration of the political and legal principles concerning the use of the geostationary orbits, but should not encroach on the competence of the International Telecommunication Union, which dealt with technical questions.

74. As for the problems of space debris, the concern of representatives of many States in that regard was understandable. However, that hardly justified an attempt to proceed immediately to elaborating legal rules on the matter without studying the scientific and technical aspects of the problem. Consideration of the legal aspect might begin with a survey of the relevant international rules and principles, as proposed by the Czech Republic. In his delegation's view, the bureau of COPUOS should continue consultations on the question with a view to finding a generally acceptable solution.

75. With regard to the other important items on the agenda of COPUOS, his delegation's position had undergone no significant changes, and it was ready to continue considering them in the spirit of the proposals already put forward.

76. Mr. GHIMIRE (Nepal) said that promotion of broader and deeper cooperation between States for the peaceful uses of outer space was a matter of universal concern. It must be recognized that, in the framework of such international cooperation, all countries should have access to and benefit from space-related development activities, taking into account the concerns and interests of the developing countries.

77. It was widely recognized that space technology had contributed greatly to world economic and social development and that it was important for the future prosperity of developing countries. Space technology was now used in a growing number of countries to promote sustainable development, to forecast and monitor the weather and to mitigate the effects of natural disasters. Its spin-off

benefits were also growing rapidly. In many developed countries, various space programmes using advanced space technologies were under way. But the developing countries, and especially the least developed among them, were lagging far behind in that regard. They lacked the necessary resources and the technological capabilities to fund research in that field. Nepal thus supported the view that there was an urgent need for broader international cooperation in that area.

78. Nepal noted with pleasure that COPUOS was playing an important role in that respect. Its initiatives in the preparation of international agreements governing various practical and peaceful applications of space science and technology merited attention. Nepal had also noted with appreciation the reports of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee.

79. The United Nations Programme on Space Applications could and should play an important role in developing necessary infrastructure and technology capabilities in the developing countries. Another important step was the establishment of regional centres for space science and technology education, and in particular the Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific, inaugurated in India. His delegation also noted with appreciation the various training programmes conducted by the Programme, and urged that participants from the least developed countries should be given greater opportunities to attend such training and workshop programmes in the future. Subject to appropriate funding, Nepal was extremely interested in sending participants to the United Nations International Training Course on Communications and Information Technology for Development, the Seventh United Nations/Sweden International Training Course on Remote Sensing Education for Educators and the Second United Nations Conference on Spin-off Benefits of Space Exploration.

80. His delegation was disappointed to learn from the report of the Secretary-General (A/51/276) that he had been forced to curtail and postpone some of the mandatory activities of the Programme because of the reduction in the regular budget as a result of the current financial situation. Nepal called upon Member States and intergovernmental organizations to increase their voluntary contributions.

81. As a signatory to the 1967 Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, Nepal called upon all States, particularly countries with major space capabilities, to take measures that would advance transparency, confidence and security in the peaceful uses of outer space.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FIFTY-FIRST SESSION

Official Records

SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE
(FOURTH COMMITTEE)
14th meeting
held on
Wednesday, 13 November 1996
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 14th MEETING

Chairman: Ms. CARAYANIDES (Australia)
(Vice-Chairman)

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In the absence of Mr. Kittikhoun (Lao People's Democratic Republic), Ms. Carayanides (Australia), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 83: INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE (continued) (A/51/20 and A/51/276; A/C.4/51/L.7 and L.8)

1. Mr. BOECK (Austria), introducing draft resolutions A/C.4/51/L.7 and L.8, on behalf of the Fourth Committee's Working Group on International Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, emphasized the balance struck in the draft declaration on international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for the benefit and in the interest of all States, taking into particular account the needs of the developing countries, which had been prepared on the basis of extremely detailed discussions and was set out in the annex to draft resolution A/C.4/51/L.7; the declaration would become the fifth document in the code of principles regulating activities in outer space adopted by the General Assembly and would constitute an important addition to the body of outer space regulations.

2. With regard to draft resolution A/C.4/51/L.8, he drew attention to the paragraphs concerning improvement of the working methods and enhancement of the effectiveness of the work of the Legal Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), the recommendations on the priority questions to be considered by its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, in particular the question of space debris, and the recommendations concerning the convening of a special session of the Committee (UNISPACE III) and the preparations for it. He expressed the hope that both draft resolutions would be adopted by consensus.

3. Mr. WIBISONO (Indonesia) said that space science and the application of space technology were a sine qua non for achieving sustainable development, but the vast majority of nations, particularly the developing nations, were facing formidable obstacles in gaining access to advanced technology, knowledge and information in that field. The rapid commercialization of space activities was a further source of concern.

4. Indonesia had recognized the tangible benefits of space activities for the advancement of its national goals and had established its own satellite system for telecommunications and television broadcasting and was conducting work on remote sensing. Although its resources were limited, it offered other developing countries the opportunity of participating in various cooperation programmes on the peaceful uses of outer space. Its commitment to the objectives of cooperation had been reflected, in particular, in the holding in Indonesia in 1996 of the ninth meeting of the Expert Group on Remote Sensing of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and in the organization of other events.

5. In view of the increasing significance of outer space activities in the overall development of the global community in an era of transition from

confrontation to cooperation, COPUOS had a special role to play in developing a framework to ensure the equitable sharing of the benefits derived from outer space activities. In that connection it was essential to underscore the need to strengthen the United Nations Programme on Space Applications. However, it was regrettable that the recommendations of the second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE 82) had not been fully implemented.

6. Indonesia welcomed the completion of the work on the draft declaration on international cooperation, which it regarded as an important milestone in the elaboration of the legal foundations for regulating outer space activities. It recommended that the General Assembly should adopt the document.

7. His delegation was pleased to note the constructive discussions on the working paper on the geostationary orbit submitted by Colombia. Along with other equatorial States, Indonesia had consistently emphasized the need for negotiations on that vital issue, particularly with regard to the establishment of a legal regime for the geostationary orbit which would take into account the interests of all States, especially those of the developing countries and including those of equatorial States.

8. The Indonesian delegation supported in principal the view that the third UNISPACE conference should be held before 2000 in order to formulate proposals for the next millennium.

9. With regard to the question of the prevention of an arms race in outer space, Indonesia believed that the work of COPUOS should complement the work done in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament and the First Committee of the General Assembly. Suitable practical mechanisms for coordinating the two bodies should be established.

10. With regard to the discussion of the working methods of COPUOS, the Indonesian delegation reiterated the position of the Group of 77 concerning compliance with the principles of equitable geographical representation and rotation of the membership of the bureaux of the Committee and its Subcommittees in accordance with the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

11. Mr. LANDERAS (Cuba) said that COPUOS and its two Subcommittees had a special responsibility for ensuring that the developing countries which did not possess advanced space technology or sufficient resources could take advantage of the advances made in that area.

12. His delegation was in favour of the adoption of the draft declaration on international cooperation. The declaration was extremely important and would serve as the basis for effective and fruitful cooperation which would create equal conditions and opportunities for all. COPUOS was precisely the organ to strengthen that cooperation and it could also furnish support for the work on the prevention of the militarization of and an arms race in outer space.

13. The nature of the COPUOS report and the breadth of its treatment of the questions discussed was evidence of the accomplishment of serious work, and

Cuba, as a full member of COPUOS, confirmed its determination to continue to make a contribution to the attainment of the goals which had been set.

14. With regard to the organization of the work of COPUOS, his delegation supported the proposal that the duration of its sessions should be not less than five and a half weeks. It was also in favour of maintaining the necessary balance and ensuring rotation of the membership of the Committee's bureau on a regional basis. As in the past, the bureau should have five members, but those five places should rotate among the five geographical regions in order to ensure an equitable geographical distribution and the necessary transparency. The Committee's agenda should be expanded to include further items of general interest.

15. The Cuban delegation was in favour of the convening of a special session of the Committee (UNISPACE III), preferably in 1999, open to all Members of the United Nations.

16. Mr. GUANI (Uruguay) said that at the Third Space Conference of the Americas, held in the Uruguayan city of Punta del Este in November 1996, the American countries, China, Indonesia, the Russian Federation, Spain and Turkey had examined issues of regional cooperation with a view to finding applications for the achievements of space science and technology, and had considered the issues of sustainable development, the environment, space science and technology, education and communications. His delegation trusted that the text of the Punta del Este Declaration which had been adopted at that Conference would be circulated in the Committee. A space exhibition, featuring exhibits provided by the space agencies of the United States and the Russian Federation, had formed an extremely important backdrop to the work of the Conference.

17. Regarding the work of COPUOS, his delegation believed that its effectiveness should be enhanced and that budget restrictions should not hamper the work that was being carried out by its Subcommittees.

18. His Government hoped that a Latin American regional training centre for space science and technology would be established shortly. His delegation also wished to point out that the recommendation that an international conference on space-related issues should be held in 1999 or 2000 deserved full support; his Government would like the agenda of such a conference to include questions relating to the use of space technology in the interests of sustainable development, the environment and education.

19. Mr. SAMADI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the peaceful uses of space and its related technologies were of great importance to the overall development of the Islamic Republic of Iran in view of their role in communications and data transmission, resource exploration, environmental monitoring and protection, tele-education, tele-medicine, weather forecasting and radio and television broadcasts. They were also important in ensuring sustainable development on an environmentally sound basis. The policies adopted by the Islamic Republic of Iran would promote international cooperation and collaboration among Asia-Pacific countries within the framework of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

20. Member States should take more resolute steps to enable COPUOS to fulfil its task of preserving outer space for peaceful purposes, which could be achieved by creating a firm international framework based on further development of international space law and strengthening of international cooperation for the peaceful exploration and uses of outer space. To that end it was necessary to ensure transparency in outer space activities, as well as the exchange of data and equitable sharing of space benefits between developed and developing countries. In that connection, his delegation welcomed the adoption of the draft declaration on international cooperation and trusted that it would be adopted by the General Assembly by consensus. The Legal Subcommittee should be considered as the heart of COPUOS, and should be more active in developing international law for the exploration and peaceful utilization of outer space.

21. His delegation once again emphasized the competence of the Conference on Disarmament on questions relating to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Since it was almost impossible to draw a clear line between peaceful and non-peaceful uses of outer space, a mechanism of cooperation and coordination should be established so that the work of the Conference on Disarmament could be complemented by that of the Committee.

22. On the question of regional centres for space science and technology education, his delegation welcomed the inauguration in November 1995 of the Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific in New Delhi. Citing the amendment proposed by the Islamic Republic of Iran to the agreement establishing the Centre, his delegation expressed its conviction that approval of the proposed amendment would undoubtedly pave the way for realization of the Committee's objective.

23. His Government shared the common position of the Group of 77 on the issue of the working methods of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies and believed that the principles of rotation and equitable representation should apply in future elections to the Committee and its subsidiary bodies.

Draft resolution A/C.4/51/L.7

24. Draft resolution A/C.4/51/L.7 was adopted.

Draft resolution A/C.4/51/L.8

25. Mr. NUÑEZ MOSQUERA (Cuba) said that during the previous day's meeting of the Working Group on International Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, several delegations had expressed misgivings about the use in operative paragraph 10 of the phrase "notes with satisfaction" in combination with the part of the same paragraph which stated that "the Committee would evaluate the use of unedited verbatim transcripts". The opinion had been voiced that it would hardly be advisable for the General Assembly to note "with satisfaction" an event which had not yet taken place and that the current wording appeared to put pressure on COPUOS. Perhaps that at the current session the General Assembly should simply "note", and then "express satisfaction" at the next session.

26. Mr. BOECK (Austria) said that at the previous day's meeting, the members of the Working Group had agreed that the words "with satisfaction" applied to measures that had already been adopted, namely to those mentioned in document A/51/20, paragraph 208. As the Director of the Secretariat's Office for Outer Space Affairs had indicated, the savings that could be made by switching to unedited verbatim transcripts would be over $600,000 during one course of the biennium. That was why an understanding had been reached the previous day that the wording in question in no way predetermined the outcome of the evaluation process to be carried out by the Committee, and the draft resolution could be adopted in its present form. Delegations had been urged to act accordingly.

27. Mr. RIBEIRO (Brazil) said that the issue of unedited verbatim transcripts formed part of the larger question of the working methods of COPUOS, which had been a topic of discussion for the last two or three years. The issue involved, among other things, the question of whether to include new items which were of interest to members of the Group of 77 on the agenda of the Legal Subcommittee. For that reason, it had been proposed to leave the wording of paragraph 10 in its present form.

28. The CHAIRMAN said he took it that, if there were no objections, the Committee wished to adopt draft resolution A/C.4/51/L.8 in its present form.

29. Draft resolution A/C.4/51/L.8 was adopted.

30. Ms. KATO (Japan) said that her delegation recognized that the transition to unedited verbatim transcripts would lead to savings and greater efficiency, and therefore questioned why separate records were needed for meetings of COPUOS and its Legal Subcommittee, especially in view of the fact that they produced a single report on their work. Her delegation had already stated its view at the Committee's thirty-ninth session, as reflected in paragraph 209 of its report (A/51/20). Her delegation had joined the consensus on resolution A/C.4/51/L.8 on the understanding that COPUOS would also evaluate that question at its fortieth session.

31. The CHAIRMAN said that he had received a request to publish the declaration and plan of action adopted at the Third Space Conference of the Americas held at Punta del Este (Uruguay) in 1996 as a document of the General Assembly. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee agreed to the request.

32. It was so decided.

33. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had concluded its consideration of agenda item 83.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

34. Mr. ATSKE-SELASSIE (Ethiopia), referred to the change in the Fourth Committee's programme of work whereby agenda item 86 on peacekeeping operations would be taken up on 18 rather than 15 November. He could think of no convincing reason for the rescheduling change, which had caused considerable disruption to his delegation's own programme of work, dictated as it was by the need to participate in the work of other General Assembly committees. He

therefore urged the Chairman and the Secretariat to keep to the agreed upon programme of work.

35. The CHAIRMAN said that the decision to reschedule consideration of agenda item 86 had been dictated by the fact that the list of speakers for 15 November was too short. In order to make optimum use of the Secretariat's resources, the first meeting on agenda item 86 had therefore been postponed to 18 November.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.